

Statewide Planning Program  
One Capitol Hill  
Providence, RI 02908  
www. planning.ri.gov



Work on the Statewide Planning Program’s website this quarter included:

- posting of Transportation Improvement Plan Amendments.
- posting of State produced population projections.
- posting of public hearing notices
- electronic filing of committee agenda’s and minutes with the secretary of state’s office.
- posting of city/town affordable housing plans for review and approved affordable housing plan.
- posting of city and town amendments to their comprehensive plans.
- posting of State Planning Council, Technical Committee, Rivers Council, Growth Planning Council, and Transportation Advisory Committee’s calendar and agendas.
- posting of monthly newsletter.
- posting of quarterly report.

*For information on the Statewide Planning Program’s website contact Kim A. Gelfuso at (401) 222-5764,. kimgo@lori.state.ri.us*

## STAFF NEWS

**Michael Ahnrud, Supervising Planner,** celebrated 15 years with state government.

**Walter Slocomb, Principal Planner,** celebrated 25 years with state government.

**Vin Flood** is the proud father of Joseph Flood born April 7th, 2005

**John O’Brien** is a new grandfather of Mackenzie Jordan Olivieria arrived on April 5th

# Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program

One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02908  
401-222-7901 www.planning.state.ri.us



April—June 2005  
Number 415

## Quarterly Progress Report

### *Rhode Island’s CEDS: New and Improved*

The economic development planning done at Statewide Planning is funded by a grant from the Economic Development Administration (EDA), U.S. Department of Commerce. Each year, as a condition of this grant, the Economic Development Section of Statewide Planning conducts a solicitation of projects to implement the state’s EDA-approved Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Projects determined to be the most effective means of satisfying the CEDS are placed on a “Priority Project List” and submitted to the EDA with a CEDS *Annual Report*. Projects making the list are considered eligible for EDA funding, which their sponsors must pursue on their own through a rigorous application process, but with the assurance that they have the endorsement of the state.

The CEDS process gives municipalities, public agencies, academic institutions, and nonprofit economic development entities the opportunity to access EDA grant money, but also to partner among themselves for truly regional economic development. The projects may take the form of infrastructure improvements, new construction, building rehabilitation and reuse, or design and engineering studies. The annual project solicitation incorporates changes from year to year to improve the process and to align it with the latest funding priorities of the EDA. This may involve new ways of scoring projects for the priority list, or more fundamental, procedural changes. The Economic Development Section initiated several of the latter with this year’s solicitation.

The changes were not pursued on a whim or on advice from the EDA, but as a result of a technical paper that tracked nine projects that were funded by the EDA over the five-year period 1996 to 2000. The Economic Development Section evaluated these projects in terms of job generation, prevailing wages, support of high-growth industrial clusters, and the CEDS selection process in general. Our research revealed shortcomings that needed to be addressed if our aspirations for the program are to remain high.

First, we decided the selection process had to establish a minimum threshold for job generation. This year’s project solicitation introduced the requirement that each project proposal had to anticipate at least 50 direct jobs, before accounting for the effects of economic multipliers. Second, we wanted to favor projects that not only provided wages above poverty levels, but on a par with or exceeding the current average wage in Rhode Island. Accordingly, we established the average wage across all the state’s industrial sectors as the new wage standard for CEDS projects. Previously, we had used the Rhode Island minimum wage.

We also introduced a new criterion for workforce development and aligned our concentration on clusters to those that have been identified by the R.I. Economic Development Corporation. We increased the number of points awarded for partnerships between applicants, in line with the current focus on partnerships by the EDA.

Most significantly, however, we expanded the role of an oversight group called the CEDS Subcommittee to select projects for ultimate endorsement – and placement on the Priority Project List – by the State Planning Council. In previous solicitations, the Economic Development Section staff scored the projects and presented a list, rather than the projects themselves, to the CEDS Subcommittee for their approval. Typically this was an up-or-down vote with little direct acquaintance with the projects by the Subcommittee. This time, the staff shared narrative descriptions of the projects with the Subcommittee, describing jobs, wages, economic distress at the project site, and other factors. The staff still scored the projects and made recommendations, but the actual selection was now the responsibility of the CEDS Subcommittee. At their option, members of the Subcommittee could accept the staff's recommendations or modify them, for example choosing only the very top

scorers, or making accommodations for others based on their reading of the project narratives. The results of these changes were remarkable. The proposals submitted in this year's solicitation had the highest median score of any solicitation to date. The highest-scoring project was only 25 points from a perfect score, another record for the solicitation. The average number of jobs across the proposals selected for the Priority Project List was 459 (range: 60-2,500). The average wage across the proposals was \$40,384 (116% Rhode Island's all-industry average of \$34,860). In addition, all of the projects recommended by the Subcommittee were partnerships, and most (five out of seven) involved a workforce development component, with educational programs conducted in-house or with other partners. And all but one project was expected to have a regional or statewide impact rather than a purely local one.

The Economic Development Section will need to follow those projects that win funding from the EDA to see if the numbers hold for the anticipated jobs and wages and the other promising prospects come true.

Graphics Room—Aerial Photos

Graphic assistance was provided to the Atrium Gallery. Technical assistance was provided to other agencies within DOA.

112 aerial photographs were loaned to cities, towns, other state government agencies and the private sector.

Staff also assisted with inquires regarding photographic and digital aerals.

Economic Development

The Economic Development Section, acting as the state's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) staff, concluded the 2005 CEDS project solicitation on May 6. This included a special workshop that was held on April 13, attracting 22 potential applicants representing municipalities, academic institutions, public agencies or private nonprofits.

A total of ten projects were received during the project solicitation; of these, seven scored high enough to be considered for the Priority Project List. Following a thorough review of the projects by a subcommittee, all seven were forwarded to the Technical Committee for approval. The Technical Committee endorsed the List and moved it on to the State Planning Council, which granted its approval on June 9. The List was then sent to the EDA at the end of June.

The successful applicants included (in alphabetical order) the City of East Providence, partnering with the R.I. Department of Transportation; the City of Pawtucket, partnering on two projects with the City of Central Falls and the Pawtucket Armory Association, respectively; the City of Providence, also partnering on two projects, with the Providence Community Health

Centers and the Greater Providence YMCA, both private nonprofits, respectively; and the R.I. Economic Development Corporation, partnering on two projects with the Business Innovation Factory and the Quonset Development Corporation, respectively. The Priority Project List may be found on the Economic Development page of the Statewide Planning Program website, [www.planning.ri.gov](http://www.planning.ri.gov).

During the quarter, Mr. Tyrone L. Beach of the Philadelphia regional office of the Economic Development Administration (EDA) visited Rhode Island and met with many of these applicants, all of whom had contacted the EDA in previous funding cycles and were following up those contacts with revised applications. Placement on the CEDS Priority Project List is a prerequisite for most EDA funding, hence Mr. Beach's interest in the projects.

Staff from the Economic Development Section represent Statewide Planning on a number of important intergovernmental groups, one of which is the Ad Hoc Group of the Rhode Island Bays, Rivers and Watersheds Coordination Team. This quarter, the Ad Hoc Group met in a series of workshops to formulate a strategy for identifying issues and implementing policies in a Systems Level Plan to be developed for Narragansett Bay.

Intergovernmental Review	
63	new proposals received
61	completed
2	pending

Review of EDC projects	
8	proposals received this quarter
7	proposals pending
1	proposal suspended

# RI Census

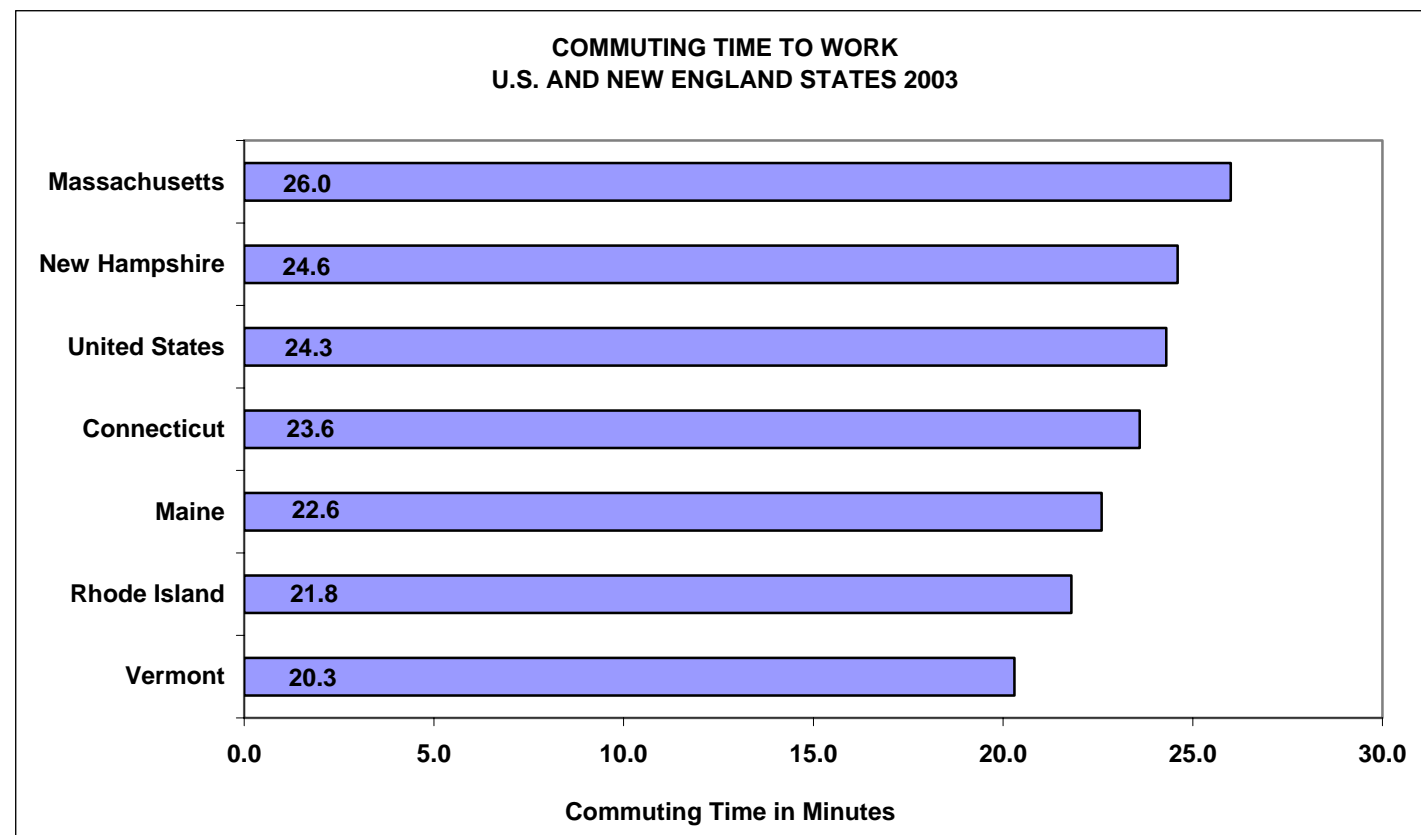


Rhode Islanders spend more than 180 hours each year commuting to and from work, according to the 2003 American Community Survey (ACS) data released by the U.S. Census Bureau. A ranking of states by *commuting-to-work times* places Rhode Island, with an average travel time of 21.8 minutes per commute (almost ¾ of an hour round-trip), tied with Nevada for 31<sup>st</sup> place.

The national average of 24.3 minutes per commute is surpassed by 13 states and the District of Columbia, with New York and Maryland each posting in excess of one-half hour commutes.

Massachusetts commuters spend 26 minutes on the road each morning en-route to work, the longest travel time of all six New England states. Shaving more than 4 minutes off the Bay State’s average commuting time, Rhode Islanders also spend less time on the road than residents of New Hampshire, Connecticut and Maine. Vermont workers lay claim to the shortest commuting time of all New Englanders, spending less than 20.3 minutes in their morning commute.

Census information on commuters and other transportation-related data help local, regional and state agencies improve, maintain, plan and develop the nation’s public transportation infrastructure.



# Committee Actions

## STATE PLANNING COUNCIL

The Council met in April, and June. They approved amendments to the current Transportation Improvement Program and also accepted the draft FFY 2006 – 2007 Transportation Improvement Program for a public hearing. They also approved the FY 2006 Priority Project List for the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy as well as the Program’s FY 2006 Work Program. The Council provided findings on revised development regulations for the Quonset/Davisville Commerce Park in accord with the provisions of the Review Agreement entered into by the state as part of the original transfer of that property.

## TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

The Committee met on a monthly basis during the quarter. They continued to focus on the update of the Land Use Policies and Plan. Meetings were devoted to the discussion of the strategies to implement the goals and objectives of the plan as well as input into the development of the different future land use scenarios. The Committee also provided input into all the above noted action items taken by the State Planning Council including the Work Program and the update of the Transportation Improvement Program.

## TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)** met on April 28, May 26 and June 30. The TAC took the following actions:

- At its April meeting, the TAC received and accepted subcommittee reports that scored and ranked transportation project proposals from cities, towns, state agencies, and others for inclusion in the FY 2006 –2007 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
- At its May meeting, the TAC approved the preliminary draft TIP for the purpose of a public hearing.
- At its June meeting, immediately following two public hearings, the TAC approved the draft TIP with changes, and recommended State Planning Council approval.

# Transportation

## Washington County Transit-Oriented Development Study

The Statewide Planning Program is participating with the Washington County Regional Planning Council (WCRPC) and the Town of North Kingstown in a study of potential growth and land use impacts of the planned extension of commuter rail service south of Providence to Wickford Junction in North Kingstown. Pare Engineering is the consultant selected for the study.

To address growing travel demands of the West Bay and South County corridors, the State, in cooperation with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) is planning to extend the current Boston to Providence commuter rail service southward along the AMTRAK Northeast Corridor to an initial terminus at a new station at Wickford Junction in North Kingstown. While expanded rail service holds numerous benefits for the state's future development, there is also the concern that the added amenity of convenient rail transit service would increase the accessibility and desirability of the already fast-growing Washington or "South" County region.

This study attempts to assist the region and communities with proactive planning to assess and define the best means to manage any added growth in sound ways. A workshop was held in March with planning officials from the region and the public to explore likely growth impacts. A quantitative assessment of growth forecasts and of build out capacity to absorb growth within a ten-minute drive radius was presented as part of a panel discussion that included representatives of Statewide Planning, Grow Smart Rhode Island, local realtors, town officials, and a representative from the [Boston] Metropolitan Area Planning Council from Grafton, MA – a town that was the host for a new commuter rail station in 1997. The second phase of the study includes an assessment by the consultant team of areas within the region that may be good candidates to accommodate growth that could accompany commuter rail service, and of techniques that the region's communities may wish to employ to foster growth in these places, while discouraging growth in

locations that are not well suited. Growth management and transit-supportive development techniques such as transit-oriented development, bicycle, pedestrian, and bus connections, growth centers, and transfer of development rights are explored.

A second public meeting with planning officials from the region was held on June 1, 2005 to discuss findings and recommendations relative to the capacity for Transit-oriented Development at the Wickford Junction station area, and other potential TOD opportunities at existing or possible future station areas in Washington County --Westerly, Kingston, Wood River Junction, Carolina, and Shannock. The draft study report is now being revised based on input received at the public workshops, and will be released shortly via the websites of the study participants.

### Transportation staff submitted comments to:

1. The federal Surface Transportation Board regarding the Providence and Worcester's Railroad's request to abandon rail lines in East Providence.
2. The Federal Energy Regulatory Committee regarding the proposed expansion of the liquid natural gas terminal at Field's Point in Providence.
3. The RI Department of Transportation regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Routes 6 and 10 interchange.

Statewide Planning signed a Memorandum of Understanding, along with other state and federal agencies and the Narragansett Indian Tribe for the review of documents for the T.F. Green Environmental Impact Statement.

The Greenhouse Gas Stakeholders (of which Statewide Planning is a member and active participant) received a 2005 Climate Protection Award from the US Environmental Protection Agency. This is a national/international award that recognizes leadership in developing strategies to deal with the effects of Greenhouse warming and climate change. Staff attended a Tribal Transportation Summit, held in Cambridge, MA, as part of our continued effort to coordinate with the Narragansett Indian Tribe.

# Land Use

## Land Use Plan -- Work Session with R.I. Chapter, American Planning Association

On May 20<sup>th</sup>, Statewide Planning's Land Use staff reported to nearly 40 RIAPA members on their findings and initial recommendations for the new State Land Use Plan, which is currently nearing the final draft stage. Staff reported on existing conditions, including an analysis of the extent of development accomplished by comparing statewide maps of the existing land uses with a statewide composite maps of the Community Future Land Use Plans. Staff also introduced the new plan's overarching goals for greenspace, community design, infrastructure and implementation as well as 23 major objectives to further these goals.

Staff reported on Geographic Analysis which they have been conducting using the data of the R. I. Geographic Information System. The Geographic Analysis attempts to answer the question: What is optimum use for land in the

foreseeable future? The analysis focused on the undeveloped areas of the state, which amounts to nearly 40% of the total land area. The work includes a land suitability analysis leading to identification of the best potential areas for both development and conservation. Four alternative future land use scenarios will be mapped and studied prior to selection of a final recommended plan.

## Land Use Plan – Presentation to State Strategic Housing Plan Committee

On June 15<sup>th</sup> the Land Use staff presented the findings and draft goals and objectives of the draft update of the Land Use Plan to the committee and consultants beginning work on the State Strategic Housing Plan. The presentation focused on aspects of the land use research which particularly pertain to residential land uses, trends related to housing development, opportunities for increasing housing diversity and density. Findings of the new plan's RIGIS Geographic Analysis should prove helpful in identifying areas with the best potential for more density and for mixed use centers.

# Comprehensive Plans

Progress by the Comprehensive Plans Section during the final quarter of FY 2005 was highlighted by the State approval of a number of local comprehensive plan documents. These documents include:

- the original Comprehensive Plan submitted by the Town of West Warwick
- Five-Year Updates submitted by the Towns of East Greenwich and South Kingstown
- Affordable Housing Plans submitted by the Towns of Bristol, Lincoln, Little Compton, Middletown, New Shoreham, Smithfield, and South Kingstown
- Amendments NK 04-1 (establishing a Planned Village District) and NK 04-2 (incorporating the "Quonset Davisville Port and Commerce Park Master Plan") to the Town of North Kingstown's Comprehensive Plan

Received for review State requested revisions to the Affordable Housing Plans for the Towns of Coventry, East Greenwich, Exeter, Foster, Johnston, Narragansett, and West Greenwich.

Received comprehensive plan amendment submissions from the Towns Of Middletown, North Kingstown, and North Providence and the Cities of East Providence and Woonsocket for a determination of completeness for State review and, when complete, the commencement of the State review

The proposed comprehensive plan amendment for the City of Woonsocket has generated significant public comment in the form of letters, e-mails, petitions, phone calls, and newspaper articles. Several site visits have also been undertaken by Statewide Planning Program staff

The Comprehensive Plans Section were among a number of Statewide Planning Program staff members who attended and "graduated" from the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy's informative and entertaining program on Comprehensive Planning

Oversaw the efforts of Jennifer Bline, an intern from St Mary Bay View High School, in locating and then compiling information regarding proposed expansions of public sewer and water service areas

Provided technical assistance upon requests ranging from school enrollment projections for Foster/Glocester to complaints about private usage of State-owned property to recommended formats for a Request of Services and Public Notice to the status of pending or newly adopted legislation